

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Carson Manufacturing Company, Inc.

Indiana MEP - Purdue Technical Assistance Program

Carson Manufacturing Switches to Lean

Client Profile:

Carson is a contract manufacturing company and a siren and rotary switch manufacturer. The company has designed/patented several other technically advanced components used in products including transformers, electronic voting machines, high fidelity sound systems, electronic sirens, A/V programmers and remote air control systems. Carson Manufacturing employs 26 people at its facility in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Situation:

Carson Manufacturing's President, Barbara Carson-Ferguson, was not pleased when manufacturing reports showed that the company was not meeting labor standards on any of its 18 product lines. Time-to-stock was anywhere from 3 to 7 days. In the production area, there were multiple carts with work-in-process (WIP) in different stages with no identification of what was being produced, personal tool boxes littered with notes on process techniques, and a high number of line quality-related issues. The Carson team had worked with the Indiana MEP Purdue Technical Assistance Program (TAP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, since 1992, and decided to take part in a program that not only trained the company's 26 employees, but also assisted them in implementing new process improvement methods.

Solution:

TAP introduced Carson Manufacturing employees to Lean manufacturing, including 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)/workplace organization, culture/change management and an overview of all Lean tools. The program went on to develop practitioners who would become knowledgeable of Value Stream Mapping and cellular flow/manufacturing, as well as champions capable of sustaining the company's continuous improvement endeavor. The champions also learned how to create a Lean strategy, develop performance metrics and facilitate Kaizen events. As a result of TAP's assistance, Carson Manufacturing associates have worked as an empowered team to tackle the inefficiencies that initially drove their new continuous improvement program. They have been successful in meeting and/or exceeding labor standards on 12 of their 18 product lines. They have utilized newly learned problem solving methodology to reduce their number of quality issues. Carson's Lean initiative has not only impacted manufacturing, but also front office administration. Purchasing now uses consignment and kanban systems when procuring materials.

Results:

- * Exceeded labor standards on 12 out of 18 product lines.
- * Reduced time-to-stock from 3-7 days to the same day.

Testimonial:

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"TAP went above and beyond to learn our product mix, production structure and our business strategy. Improvements would not have been possible without the commitment from upper management and the dedication and personal involvement of the Indiana MEP instructors."

Jorge Reyes, Operations Manager